

# Grilling and Fire Pit Safety

Grilling and/or gathering around the fire pit with friends and family are great ways to relax and unwind. However, safe handling practices should be observed. Knowing how to prevent burns and property damage should be a part of your routine so your relaxing evening doesn't result in an injury or turn into a devastating event.



To help prevent injury while enjoying these activities safely, follow these simple precautions:

- Position grills and fire pits outside at least 10 feet from any structures. This includes fencing, siding, decks, railings, and low hanging trees or brush.
- Avoid placing your grill or fire pit on a flammable surface such as dry grass or a wooden deck.
- Never leave grills or fire pits unattended, even for short periods of time. Someone should always remain with the fire.
- Don't operate your grill or fire pit in an enclosed place. This could cause a fire and/or expose people to toxic gases and asphyxia.
- Keep children and pets away from the area. Identify, mark, and communicate a three-foot safe zone around the grill and fire pit. Teach kids to "stop, drop, and roll" in case their clothes catch fire.
- Before you light the fire, check the wind direction. Embers and flames carry farther when it is windy. Instruct guests to sit upwind to stay clear of smoke and potential wind-blown embers.

And most importantly,

- Be ready to extinguish any flames. Keep a fire extinguisher, garden hose, or bucket filled with water nearby.

## When grilling:

Always clean your grill before each use to avoid any grease buildup and subsequent flame eruptions. You should only use charcoal starter fluid or other approved grilling starter – avoid using any other flammable liquids or combustibles. To prevent burns or other injury, use long-handled tools designed for grilling. And when finished, wait until the coals are completely cooled before disposing the remains in an approved container.

## For the fire pit:

Check with your local fire department or municipality to make sure there are no burn bans in your area. Rules can change on a seasonal basis, as dry or windy conditions affect fire safety. To reduce the risk of a brush fire or burn, only use seasoned hardwood. It's best to avoid using soft wood, such as pine or cedar, that can pop and throw sparks. Don't burn trash, leaves, paper, cardboard, or plywood. If possible, have a spark screen in place.

**Never use flammable fluids such as gasoline, alcohol, diesel fuel, kerosene, or charcoal lighter fluid to light or relight fires.**

Before you call it a night, make sure the fire is completely extinguished by pouring water over any live embers and turning the logs to make sure all sides of the wood have stopped burning.

Now that you've read these tips, safely enjoy the grill and fire pit gathering!